
4. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

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Scope of the EIR Analysis

The Environmental Analysis chapter of this Draft EIR discusses the environmental and regulatory setting, impacts, and mitigation measures for each of the following technical issue areas (Sections 4.2 through 4.15):

- 4.1 Land Use
- 4.2 Parks and Recreation
- 4.3 Visual Resources
- 4.4 Transportation and Circulation
- 4.5 Air Quality
- 4.6 Noise
- 4.7 Public Utilities
- 4.8 Public Services
- 4.9 Water Supply
- 4.10 Hydrology, Drainage and Water Quality
- 4.11 Geology and Soils
- 4.12 Hazards and Human Health
- 4.13 Cultural Resources
- 4.14 Biological Resources

The Proposed Project includes development of a 879-acre residential/recreational community with 1,325 residential units, a championship-style golf course, a neighborhood-serving commercial/retail uses, K-6 public school or a K-8 private school, approximately 1 million sf of business village use, a fire station, and supporting infrastructure. The Proposed Project (Specific Plan area) also includes the Lagoon Valley Regional Park, 1,066 acres of open space and existing uses (including residential and commercial uses).

The Specific Plan area includes the Lagoon Valley Regional Park, open space and existing privately owned commercial, vacant land and rural residential uses. In 2002 the City adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration that evaluated impacts associated with a Conditional Use Permit for on-going operation and use of the Park, improvements to the watershed areas above Lagoon Valley Lake (Lake Management Plan) to reduce sedimentation and improve water quality, and creation of an off-leash dog park. The Mitigated Negative Declaration identified potentially significant impacts associated with potential disturbance of Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle habitat, and increased sediment loading in the lake due to bank disturbing activities. Mitigation measures were adopted into the Lake Management Plan that reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level.

The City is currently undertaking an update of the Lagoon Valley Regional Park Master Plan. Other improvements, in addition to those approved under the 2002 Conditional Use Permit, could be considered. Improvements proposed as part of the Park Master Plan update could include, but might not be limited to, trails, play structures, landscaping, lake enhancements and other facilities that would be identified through a public process subject to adoption by the City Council. The Park Master Plan process will also identify means by which funding can be secured for any proposed

future improvements. The Proposed Project is not dependent on this effort, which is being undertaken independently by the City in light of the regional nature of these facilities, and is expected to be completed regardless of whether the Specific Plan is eventually approved by the City. Therefore, the Park Master Plan Update is being considered as a separate project for CEQA purposes and will undergo project-level CEQA review as more details about the master plan update is developed and proposed. Nonetheless, because of the close proximity of the Lagoon Valley Regional Park to the new development proposed under the Specific Plan, and the fact that the proposed Development Agreement between the City and the applicant requires the applicant to contribute \$4 to \$5 million to the City for park-related and other purposes (which may fund only a portion of the moneys needed for whatever ultimate park improvements the City proposes), this EIR will include a program level of environmental review of this separate project based on what is known to date about the future Park Master Plan Update and will identify any cumulative effects arising in connection with the two projects. In addition, this EIR considers the extent to which development of the approximately 879-acre proposed residential/recreational community could result in environmental impacts on regional park facilities either directly or indirectly.

The proposed Specific Plan does not include any changes to the 1,066 acres of open space uses and the approximately 21 acres of existing privately owned commercial, vacant land and rural residential uses. Therefore, this EIR considers the extent to which proposed development of a proposed residential/recreational community could result in environmental impacts to or from these existing uses that will remain unchanged as part of the project.

Section Format

Each section begins with a description of the project **environmental setting** and a **regulatory setting** as it pertains to a particular issue. The environmental setting provides a point of reference for assessing the environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives. The setting description in each section is followed by an **impacts** and **mitigation** discussion. The impact and mitigation portion of each section includes impact statements, which are prefaced by a number in bold-faced type. An explanation of each impact and an analysis of its significance follow each impact statement. All mitigation measures pertinent to each individual impact follow directly after the impact statement. The degree to which the identified mitigation measure(s) would reduce the impact is also described.

Examples of the format are shown below.

4.X-X Statement of impact for the Proposed Project in bold type.

The discussion of impacts for the Proposed Project is presented in paragraph form, and a determination of the impact's significance in ***bold, italic type***.

Mitigation Measures

4.X-X *Statement of what, if any, mitigation measures are required.*

Terminology Used in the EIR

This Draft EIR uses the following terminology to describe environmental effects of the Proposed Project:

- **Standards of Significance:** A set of criteria used by the lead agency to determine at what level or “threshold” an impact would be considered significant. Standards of Significance used in this EIR include those discussed in the CEQA Guidelines; criteria based on factual or scientific information; criteria based on regulatory standards of local, state, and federal agencies; and criteria based on goals and policies identified in the City of Vacaville General Plan. In determining the level of significance, the analysis assumes that the Proposed Project would comply with relevant federal, State, and local regulations and ordinances.
- **Less Than Significant Impact:** A project impact is considered less-than-significant when it does not reach the standard of significance and would therefore cause no substantial change in the environment (no mitigation required).
- **Potentially Significant Impact:** A potentially significant impact is an environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment; however, additional information is needed regarding the extent of the impact to make the determination of significance. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated as if it were a significant impact.
- **Significant Impact:** A project impact is considered significant if it results in a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment. Significant impacts are identified by the evaluation of project effects in the context of specified significance criteria. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce these effects to the environment where feasible where feasible.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** A project impact is considered significant and unavoidable if it would result in a substantial adverse change in the environment that cannot be feasibly avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level if the project is implemented. Findings of Overriding Considerations must be adopted if impacts cannot be mitigated.
- **Cumulative Impacts:** According to CEQA, “cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts” (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15355). CEQA requires that cumulative impacts be discussed when the “project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable” (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130 (a)).
- **Mitigation Measures:** The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15370) define mitigation as:
 - (a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
 - (b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree of magnitude of the action and its implementation;
 - (c) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
 - (d) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and
 - (e) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.